

Community News

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Rainy weather fails to dampen enthusiasm of celebrants at annual Fish Day festivities.

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Section B

Riveredge charter school moves closer to reality

■ Nature center awarded DPI grant for NOSD outdoor-classroom program that would be first in southeast Wisconsin

By DAN BENSON

Ozaukee Press staff

All systems seem to be in place for a proposed charter school at Riveredge Nature Center after it received a \$700,000 charter school planning and implementation grant from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

The Riveredge Outdoor Learning Elementary School, or ROLES, would be authorized by the Northern Ozaukee School District with an opening planned for the 2019-2020 school year.

It will ultimately accommodate up to 99 students in kindergarten through fifth grade each year and use the nature center's 379 acres of restored natural sanctuary in the Town of Saukville as an outdoor classroom on a year-round basis.

It will be the first such school in southeast Wisconsin, officials said.

The DPI grant was obtained through a competitive process and will help fund a year of planning and development for the new school, including hiring a lead teacher, funding support services, equipment purchases and classroom furniture, Riveredge officials said.

ROLES will be a public school and be tuition free. It will be an independent organization led by a governance council and will be financially self-sustaining without need for fundraising.

A contract between the district and Riveredge has yet to be finalized. The School Board earlier this month began a review of the contract and is scheduled to vote on the document when it next meets on Aug. 20. It will then go to Riveredge for approval.

The contract, Supt. Dave Karrels said, is modeled after a standard charter contract from DPI.

Under the contract, Karrels said the district would receive \$500 per student, "whether they live in the district or no." The district would also receive a 5% administrative fee for funds that flow through the district to the charter school.

It's also likely the school will bring new students into the district.

The proposed school is proving to be very popular, officials said. Originally, officials forecast an initial enrollment of 30 to 40 students. But initial reaction has been so strong they already project a first-year enrollment of 60 or more, although they haven't started accepting applications, Riveredge Executive Director Jessica Jens said.

Enrollment will be capped at 99 due to space limitations, she said. They expect to reach that number in the 2020-2021 school year.

If applications to attend the school outnumber seats available, a lottery system will be used. In future years, siblings of students already attending will be given preference, officials said.

"We don't have any official enrollment yet," Jens said. "But we put together an informal survey online and in social media, and in that survey we had families from 20 different See **School** on page 4B



RIVEREDGE NATURE CENTER camp counselor Nikki Aterianus led a group of children on an outdoor exploration during a summer day camp Monday. The proposed Riveredge charter school would offer outdoor classrooms and similar activities. Photo by Sam Arendt



A PLANTER FILLED with herbs was moved in a demonstration garden by Lindenwood 4-H Club member Timothy Gierach. The garden, a joint horticulture project between 4-H and the Ozaukee Master Gardeners, will be displayed throughout the Ozaukee County Fair next week. Photo by Sam Arendt

Budding garden masters

Joint horticultural effort helps local 4-H members develop their green thumbs

By KRISTYN HALBIG ZIEHM

Ozaukee Press staff

A small, lush garden surrounded by a white picket fence is tucked away next to a building at the Ozaukee County Fairgrounds.

The garden is buzzing, literally, with bees darting among the plants and youngsters giggling as they tend to the vegetables, herbs and flowers.

A joint venture between the Ozaukee Master Gardeners and the county's 4-H clubs, the garden will be on display when the county fair kicks off next week.

A master gardener will be on hand

from 1 to 2 p.m. and 7 to 8 p.m. each day during the fair's Aug. 1 to 5 run to discuss the garden with fairgoers.

The plot is literally a teaching garden, and the education is contagious. On Monday, a group of eight 4-Hers scammed about the garden, mulching and checking the plants while sampling a few of the beans, peas and herbs growing in the raised beds.

"Try this," Hannah Riemer said as she handed her mother a sprig of bronze fennel. "It's good."

A long-term project for the six master gardeners and the roughly dozen

students, the group has been meeting monthly since fall to learn the basics of gardening, everything from composting to watering techniques.

The master gardeners taught the youngsters two lessons each night, followed by two hands-on activities — making their own compost to use at home, forcing bulbs and growing garlic, for example.

The classes are so interesting that many of the parents stay, said Barb Pfaff, whose daughter is involved.

"We take away what we learn and use See **Gardeners** on page 2B

Man charged with 7th OWI after suspected use of heroin

■ Plymouth resident found slumped over steering wheel outside Fredonia McDonald's

By DAN BENSON

Ozaukee Press staff

A Plymouth man was charged last week with his seventh offense of operating a motor vehicle while intoxicated after Ozaukee County Sheriff's deputies found him slumped over his steering wheel in his car and later, authorities said, confessed to having injected himself with heroin.

According to a criminal complaint filed in Ozaukee County Circuit:

A woman called police after she found Anthony C. Niemuth, 32, asleep in his parked car just before 11 p.m. on Saturday, July 14, in a car lot near the intersection of highways 57 and K. Niemuth told her he hadn't been drinking and drove off.

A half hour later, a deputy found Niemuth again asleep in his car parked in the McDonald's restaurant parking lot in Fredonia. The car was not running but the key was in the "on" position.

In his lap was a syringe that appeared to have been used and in the seat next to him was an unmarked pill bottle that appeared See **Arrest** on page 4B



Anthony Niemuth

United Way ramps up its next fund drive

By KRISTYN HALBIG ZIEHM

Ozaukee Press staff

With just months before kicking off its new fundraising campaign, United Way of Northern Ozaukee is taking steps to increase its ability to meet its goal.

The organization has created a campaign cabinet to help spread the word about the work it and its partner agencies do, and it is also looking at additional fundraising opportunities.

The newest fundraising event for United Way is the Farm to Fork Charity Experience at Twisted Willow restaurant in Port Washington on Friday, Sept. 14.

"The Twisted Willow has worked with United Way on many events in a smaller scale," restaurant owner Jill Bunting said. "Celebrating our fifth year, we wanted to do a bigger charity event that would give back to the community that has supported us. Because the United Way offers so many channels of outreach, we are honored to partner with them."

■ Agency creates campaign cabinet to publicize its efforts, unveils plan for charity event Sept. 14 at Port restaurant

United Way Executive Director Barbara Bates-Nelson said the event is intended to help the organization not only raise funds but also awareness, since representatives of many of its partner agencies are expected to attend.

"We've been trying for several years to raise our fundraising capacity," Bates-Nelson said. "The board recognizes there are real needs in this county and needs are increasing."

"A lot of the agencies we partner with are receiving reductions in their revenue streams. We want to make sure we have a strong non-profit community here."

United Way recently began working on homelessness prevention efforts and is now looking to address mental health issues, Bates-Nelson said.

"It's in our schools. Law enforcement is

seeing the impact of people struggling with mental health issues," she said. "That's one area we want to beef up our efforts, to try and be more impactful."

Mental health issues, she noted, impact almost every other issue, from substance abuse to unemployment to housing.

United Way has also redoubled its efforts to help abused children, joining with the United Ways in Sheboygan and Washington counties to contribute \$103,500 to the Lakeshore Regional Child Advocacy Center in Saukville.

Last year, United Way of Northern Ozaukee did not meet its \$400,000 campaign goal and was unable to offer any of the community impact grants it usually gives to support new programs and services addressing needs that are

not currently being met.

The United Way is preparing to kick off its next campaign in September. Although the board has not yet set a goal, Bates-Nelson said she continues to aim for \$400,000.

"I'm not moving off that," she said. "I'm hoping with this campaign cabinet in place, it will help us reach that."

The 6 p.m. Sept. 14 event at Twisted Willow will include a champagne reception, passed hors d'oeuvres, tasting and dessert stations with paired wine and cocktails and complementary rail beverages, beer and wines.

The menu will feature freshly harvested ingredients from the Twisted Willow farm in Grafton and other local purveyors.

A Port Washington hors d'oeuvre trolley tour ride that night will give people an opportunity to see the city sights while enjoying appetizers before heading into the restaurant, where a number of food stations

See **Agency** on page 13B



THE LUSH DEMONSTRATION GARDEN at the Ozaukee County fairgrounds is a joint horticulture project by the Ozaukee Master Gardeners and 4-H club members. Among those who worked on the project were (front row, from left) master gardeners Jane Spaulding and Cindy Behlen and (second row) Lindenwood 4-H members Lexi Lasee, Sarah Riemer, Hannah Riemer, (back row) Caleb Gierach, Timothy Riemer, Paul Riemer, Joshua Riemer and Timothy Gierach.

Photo by Sam Arendt

Gardeners: Fair display showcases project

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it in our own back yard," she said. "It's so interesting. It's teaching these kids so much."

In early May, the classes moved outside where the 26-by-19-foot garden plot was just a patch of lawn.

"There was nothing here," Cindy Behlen, the master gardener who heads the project, said. "We've come a long way in a short time."

Fellow master gardener Jane Spaulding agreed, saying, "When I came out in the snow in April to measure the garden, I did not think we could possibly pull it off."

Since the summer began, one 4-H family and a master gardener has been assigned to tend to the garden each week on a rotating basis.

Whoever is in charge each week can harvest the vegetables that are ready for picking.

"If there's too much, we'll deal with it," Spaulding said. "It was never our intent to grow massive quantities of anything. It was the variety."

The garden is overflowing with peas, lettuce, green beans, spinach, peppers, Swiss chard, radishes, watercress, carrots, patty-pan squash, tomatoes and garlic, to name a few, as well as basil, thyme, mint and other herbs. Pollinator-friendly flowers such as zinnias, cosmos and sunflowers are also featured.

"We've been battling diseases and insects," Behlen said, particularly the Japanese beetle.

The garden has several types of raised beds to give people an idea of how they can be used and the costs involved, as well as a compost bin, rain barrel and bee house.

Behlen, who spearheaded the project, said she got the idea for the

demonstration garden after attending the International Master Gardeners Conference last year.

"A lot of the topics they were offering were on encouraging Master Gardener groups to do more education," she said. "I got all excited about this."

The Ozaukee Master Gardeners adopted the horticulture initiative as a core project, Spaulding said.



DUMPING A LOAD OF mulch on a path between the raised beds in the demonstration garden was 4-H member Sarah Riemer.

Photo by Sam Arendt

"It was a natural partnership to join with 4-H," she said. "The kids are lovely and enthusiastic."

Behlen said her goal with the project is to teach the 4-Hers some basic life skills, such as working cooperatively, and to give them an appreciation for the joys and challenges of gardening.

They learn about the hard work involved, as well as the tasty rewards as they sample the vegetables they grow and experience firsthand the difference between grocery-store produce and veggies grown in a garden.

Even farm kids — about half the 4-Hers live on farms — can use the lessons taught in the demonstration garden, Behlen said.

"They understand a lot, but they look at it on a big scale," she said. "We're trying to teach them the small scale."

The lessons seem to be sticking. Riemer said she helps out with her family's garden and ultimately hopes to grow carrots and tomatoes in her own garden.

Her favorite part of gardening, she said, is eating the produce.

Timothy Gierach concurred, saying he joined the horticulture project at his mother's urging but most enjoys sampling the veggies the best.

But Lexi Lasee said her favorite part of the project was making compost. The 4-Hers were sent home with a soda bottle filled with the compost ingredients in January, and she said hers is almost all soil now.

"Every day I shake mine," she said. "Then I can take it and put the soil in my garden."

Her garden at home was the reason she joined the project, Lexi said.

"It wasn't the best. I wanted to learn how to do better," she said.

City to make its pitch for lighthouse designation

■ Application for landmark to be placed on state register will be presented next month

By KRISTYN HALBIG ZIEHM

Ozaukee Press staff

Port Washington officials will make their case for the city's breakwater and lighthouse to be listed on the state and national Registers of Historic Places next month.

Tim Heggland, a preservation consultant hired by the city to shepherd the nomination through the process, will present the city's application to the State Historic Preservation Review Board on Aug. 17.

"I think the chances are excellent (it will be accepted)," Heggland said, noting that nominations are thoroughly vetted before getting to this point.

Port's lighthouse is not unique, Heggland said, noting there are nine others built with the same basic design. But it is a handsome, Art Deco structure with a steel construction that is accessible and notable.

"As a piece of engineering, it represents a moment in time on the Great Lakes," he said. "The portholes and steel construction represent something quite modern."

Port's lighthouse and breakwater were built as a Works Progress Administration project in the early 1930s, about the time the We Energies power plant was constructed.

"The harbor had always been somewhat problematic," Heggland said. "They realized that with these large ships bringing in loads of coal for the power plant, they need to improve the harbor."

To do that, the government constructed the breakwater and "as long as they were doing that, they took the opportunity to update the lighthouse," he said.

Kathie Gordon, a member of the city's lighthouse committee, said the lighthouse's landmark status in the city is another reason for its nomination.

"It's been our iconic logo for all these years — it's only fitting," she said. "People always want to go out to the lighthouse when they visit Port."

A couple weeks ago, she said, a couple said their wedding vows under the arch of the lighthouse at sunrise.

If the review board accepts the nomination on Aug. 17, the lighthouse and breakwater will be automatically accepted to the state register, Heggland said.

It will also be forwarded to the U.S. Department of the Interior for consideration on the National Register, Heggland said, adding that nomination must be acted on within 90 days.

The City of Port Washington, which was given ownership of the lighthouse by the federal government this year, has been working

See **Lighthouse** on page 4B